What you can do

As Xanana Gusmao said in his defence plea, East Timor is 'the responsibility of the international community'.

YOU CAN HELP:

1 By urging the following policy-makers to press for Xanana Gusmao's release from prison so that he can represent his people in UN talks to resolve the conflict in East Timor:

- The UN Secretary-General, Boutros Boutros-Ghali, United Nations Secretariat, New York, NY, USA.
- President Bill Clinton, The White House, Washington DC, USA.
- The Foreign Minister in your country.
- MPs in your country.

2 By urging neighbourhood groups, churches, aid agencies, human rights organisations, unions, peace groups, students and other community groups to also lobby the people above.

3 By boycotting tourism to Bali (Indonesia's regional military headquarters responsible for military operations and repression in East Timor).

4 By joining the East Timor Talks Campaign. The Talks Campaign publishes a regular newsletter (called *The Missing Peace*), has a 10 minute video on the campaign, and has stickers, message cards, petitions, speakers and other resources on East Timor available on request.

Contact: East Timor Talks Campaign, 124 Napier St, Fitzroy 3065 Australia. Tel (03) 417 7505 Fax (03) 416 2746.

I/we wish to join the East Timor Talks Campaign and to contribute to the cost of the campaign.

Name .....

Address .....

Tel. ..... Fax. .....

Enclosed is a donation of $ .....

Send to: East Timor Talks Campaign, 124 Napier St, Fitzroy 3065 Australia. Tel. (03) 417 7505 Fax (03) 416 2746

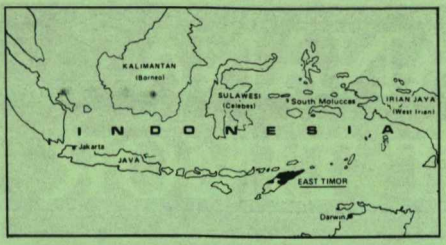
TL 1214

FREE XANANA
FREE EAST TIMOR

Still fighting: *East Timor's resistance leader, Xanana Gusmao, surrounded by Indonesian security, gives a thumbs-up sign to journalists as he is taken away from the court in Dili which, on 21 May, sentenced him to life imprisonment.* PUBLICO

'The question of East Timor is the responsibility of the international community ... I continue to recall the need for dialogue, with the participation of the East Timorese. To the Secretary General of the UN, I say that I am ready to participate in the negotiating process at any moment or in any place.'

Xanana Gusmao, 27 March 1993
From the defence plea he was not permitted to read in court.



East Timor: an international responsibility

Indonesia's military seizure of the former Portuguese colony of East Timor in 1975 contravened fundamental international norms and principles and involved massive loss of life and grave abuses of human rights. As a result, the UN called for the immediate withdrawal of Indonesian troops and for the people of East Timor to exercise their right of self-determination. The UN repeated these basic demands until 1982 when the issue was entrusted to the UN Secretary-General to find a solution. The UN has not recognised Indonesia's illegal annexation; it still regards Portugal as the administering power.

In practice, however, the international community has done little to check Indonesian excesses in East Timor or to protect the acknowledged rights of the East Timorese. Despite the clear violations of internationally accepted principles involved, Indonesia has been allowed act with impunity in East Timor. It has ignored the UN's demands and waged a relentless campaign of repression and intimidation against a determined but small and defenceless people. With few exceptions, the international community — which went to war over Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in the name of the same UN principles, has chosen to ignore Indonesia's rape of East Timor and to continue active military cooperation with Jakarta. This policy of accommodation and compliance has been largely determined by Indonesia's strategic and economic importance to Japan and the West and perceptions (played up by Indonesia but without foundation) that an independent East Timor would be unviable and a threat to Indonesia.

As a result, UN sponsored meetings between Portugal and Indonesia since 1982 have made no progress. In the absence of any real international pressure, Indonesia has been able to resist holding a referendum in East Timor or to include East Timorese in UN talks.

Not everything, however, is going Indonesia's way. Deep-seated resistance continues in East Timor despite heavy Indonesian spending on development projects. There is little doubt that Indonesia has lost the political struggle and that a referendum would go badly for Jakarta.

Further, the international community is showing signs of increasing frustration with Indonesia. Last year, for the first time since the invasion, the US cut some military aid to Indonesia in protest over the Dili massacre. In March the UN Commission on Human Rights, led by the US, rebuked Indonesia over human rights in East Timor. In April, a special envoy of the UN Secretary-General visited East Timor and had a private meeting with Xanana Gusmao in his prison. Also in April, the Pope expressed 'deep concern' over the situation in East Timor and called on Portugal and Indonesia to engage in 'frank and courageous talks' to resolve the issue. Much of this activity is the result of active public concern in many countries.

There is no doubt the international community has the power to achieve a just political settlement of this issue taking into account the interests of Indonesia and the rights of the East Timorese people. Whatever the reasons for its past inactivity, it must now exercise the leverage available to it to facilitate round table talks between Indonesia and the East Timorese as a first step towards a long term solution.

East Timor's Nelson Mandela

'The majority view, inside East Timor and outside Indonesia, is that rather than being jailed, Xanana Gusmao should be applauded for his struggle in defence of the interest of the East Timorese people. That aside, Xanana Gusmao, 'political prisoner', will become even more of an international cause celebre than Xanana Gusmao, 'political activist' ... Jakarta has been treating Xanana Gusmao as some sort of Guy Fawkes. A more hopeful sign would be its recognition that in East Timor he is more of a Nelson Mandela figure.'

Sydney Morning Herald. Editorial, 25 May 1993

Xanana Gusmao, 46, has long advocated talks with Indonesia to settle the conflict in East Timor. In 1983, he held face to face talks with Indonesia's military commander in East Timor. This resulted in a 5-month ceasefire which ended with fresh hostilities following Indonesian provocation. In 1990, he told Robert Domm, the first outsider to reach his mountain base, that 'I am ready to discuss any project for a solution, without preconditions, under the auspices of the United Nations'. Indonesia has dismissed the offer out of hand. But the proposal now enjoys wide international support and has been presented to the UN in considerable detail by Xanana Gusmao's international envoy, Jose Ramos Horta.

Xanana Gusmao's capture by the Indonesian military on 20 November 1992 and subsequent trial and life imprisonment has served to highlight, not diminish, his role. He enjoys wide credibility in East Timor and abroad as a highly principled person of integrity and intelligence. By any standards his trial was a sham. He was not allowed to choose his own lawyer or to make his own defence plea. The international community should insist that he be released from prison to represent his people in UN talks. Xanana Gusmao is a peacemaker not a troublemaker.

'I appeal to President Bill Clinton to press Jakarta to accept dialogue with the Portuguese and the Timorese in the search for an internationally acceptable solution.'

Xanana Gusmao (Defence Plea, 27 March 1993)

'I appeal to the people of Indonesia to understand that East Timor is not a threat to Indonesia ... We don't want to dismember Indonesia.'

Xanana Gusmao (Defence Plea, 27 March 1993)

'Whoever is afraid of a referendum (in East Timor) is afraid of the truth.'

Xanana Gusmao (Defence Plea, 27 March 1993)